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amount of paste to render them pliable, and this consequently takes some considerable time to get thoroughly dry, owing to the surface being made entirely waterproof by the different processes used in the decorating. During the drying process certain acids arise from the paste, and it is these that act upon the bronze, if not protected from the back by the paint mentioned, or in some other suitable way. This I can vouch for, as many experiments have been tried, and in most cases the turning can be traced to the action of acids formed by the paste while drying. This can easily be proved by getting a bronzed piece of material and pasting a label or square piece of paper on the back. After a day or so it will be seen to have a strongly defined line, showing the size of the label of paper. In a few weeks it will turn a green, and gradually get black, the inferior or cheap bronzes turning much sooner than the best ones. Then again, silver bronzes are very difficult to get to stand well, as they change sooner than gold. A very useful aluminum bronze has been lately introduced at a very reasonable price. This can be depended upon to stand, and if good never loses its color.

There is a matter in connection with decorated relief material that I wish to call particular attention to, and that is the hanging or fixing. When stamped gold, moires, and other costly papers were in more use than at present, it was always the custom to match the paper for each flank before hanging, and any good workman always made that his first consideration. But, unfortunately, a very different system now prevails, and in many cases the material is taken and fixed haphazardly, when, by a little trouble being observed, a good and even job can be turned out.

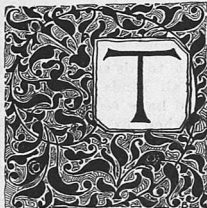
Another great mistake I have frequently noticed, and that is too much soaking and pasting. If there is too much paste it must get away somewhere, and what is a more convenient place than joints or butts. On being rolled or pressed, the paste oozes out through them, and then it must be got away somehow, and it is, generally by bringing away the scrumbles, delicate flattings, etc., leaving behind a strongly defined discolored line at the joints. This is not as a rule put down to the real cause, but the manufacturer gets the credit of it all.

The evil is just as great if the material is not soaked or pasted sufficiently, as it requires more pressure, if not pliable, to make it adhere to the wall and considerably more so if it has to be fixed on a ceiling.

Then, again, to get the work done quickly and get away from the job, on many occasions I have seen the paste put on hot! And with what result? The material dries patchy, and some of the preparation comes off on the roller, cloth, brush, or whatever has been used to press down with. These remarks apply to all embossed or relief material that has been decorated before fixing; however, the same care should be taken with the plain, as too little or too much paste will cause a shrinking at the butts or joints. This so frequently occurs that it is advisable that heads of firms should look more after these small although very important details.

COLOR ON THE COUNTRY HOUSE.

By EDWARD HURST BROWN.



THE universal habit of repainting our country houses as soon as they begin to grow the least bit dingy and to show upon their surface the mellowing effects of time, is perhaps prompted by a desire for spick-span newness which seems to actuate the American people. Hardly does a building in city or country begin to tone down to artistic harmony with its surroundings, when the services of the painter are called in, who must straightway reduce everything to a smooth, glossy and uniform surface, monotonous in its color-tone, despite the efforts of some of these knights of the brush to crowd upon the outer surface of the same house, pigments of every possible hue that can be produced by the aid of the color maker's art.

One of the greatest charms of the English country houses, from stately baronial hall to the modest thatched roof cottage that one passes by the wayside, is the play of light and color upon the surface of the walls and roof; the little patches of ever varying hues and shades that intermingle and unite to form one general color scheme, never monotonous, but a delight to the artistic eye.

The trouble with our ordinary clapboarded frame houses is that they are too stiff, too monotonous, too much as though they were turned out of a mould. They are hard in their outlines, crude and, all too frequently, utterly without artistic merit. Of course there are cases where such sweeping condemnation would be unjust, where delicate play of fancy has been shown by the architect in the design of moulding or cornice; where the general composition has a symmetry and proportion truly pleasing. But here it will usually be found either that the clapboards show but a narrow surface, breaking up the color effect by innumerable little streaks of shadow, or that the general color treatment has been very broad and simple in effect; some quiet combination of buff and white, or pearl gray and ivory, coupled with the delicate mouldings and classic outlines of the Colonial style.

But a broken color effect is altogether delightful upon a country house, and gives a piquant charm which never can be obtained by the most devoted adherence to the suggestions of the ready-mixed paint manufacturer, who would have us cover our dwellings with a glossy surface that is beautiful only to the lover of newness and an abomination to the true artistic spirit. What can be more charming than the play of light and shade, the variations of color and the softness and freedom from glare of a shingled house that has been stained by dipping the shingles before they are nailed in position. There is an infinite variety of hue and differences in color tone where every joint occurs. The roughnesses in the surface of the shingles—for split shingles should be used instead of those that have been shaved or planed to smoothness—serve but to catch and reflect the light, and to throw many minute and irregularly defined shadows on the wall that give life and vivacity to the inanimate building, and make it a speaking witness of its designer's artistic ability.

There is an objection raised to stained shingles on the part of some that they will fade or darken in time, according to the color chosen, but this is no really serious defect, for it is not until such changes take place that the stained shingles reach their fullest beauty. It is when they become blackened or weatherbeaten that the play of color becomes most intense, and that the picturesqueness of the house is most fully brought out. It then becomes a fitting subject for the artist's canvas; a study of color such as Turner might have delighted to revel in; while nothing could be more unworthy the attention of the artist than the painted wooden house.

Delightful effects can also be obtained by the use of the ordinary split cypress shingles that come from the swamps of North Carolina, used entirely without paint. In the course of two or three years exposure to the sun and rain will mellow their surface to a rich reddish brown, streaked here and there with silver, and their rugged irregularity and rough surface gives a peculiar piquancy to their employment.

If our suburban house builders would but learn that beauty is not mere newness, that picturesqueness is not paint, that color means surface variety and not mere garishness, there would be an improvement in the towns near our great cities that would soon make them equal in artistic value the quaint villages and hamlets that are a delight to our artists and architects when they visit the shores of the Old World.

DECORATIVE NOTE.

TEA tables continue to grow in favor and to multiply in design. The two latest shown are admirable in every sense, and provide for the convenience of the hostess as well as for the beauty of her room. One, the larger of the two, is a combination of bamboo frame and fine porcelain shelves; and the other unites a handsome kettle with a stand and portable tray. They are excellent, both in form and general style, and, despite their moderate cost, a great improvement upon the over dainty trifles that look too frail to support the weight of cups.